



Those Who Remain: Remembrance and Reunion After War

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A secret is revealed long after the battlefield death of a beloved and courageous army officer. His young widow, in an act of love, is inspired to climb to the treacherous north face of the Eiger in the Swiss Alps to find solace. She discovers years later that those who survived the war - his comrades devoted to keeping his memory alive - would bring the ultimate healing into her life. A compelling true story with a surprising revelation for those who seek to understand the sources of resilience and emotional transformation following heartbreaking loss, demonstrating the tenacious will of the human spirit to heal.

Those Who Remain: Remembrance and Reunion After War Details

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From Reader Review Those Who Remain: Remembrance and Reunion After War for online ebook

Marisa Young says

Very personal story of a woman who becomes a widow at the age of twenty-three when her husband is killed in Vietnam. Book takes you back to the sixties and life at that time. It also provides insight to life of a military spouse. Story tells you how one person dealt with loss and grief and, many years later, connecting with those that served with her husband.

Sheri White says

I received this book from Goodreads First Reads.

I did not expect to like this book as much as I did, but read it from start to finish within 24 hours. The book might have benefited from a bit more careful editing and the author seemed to take a while to find her rhythm, but neither a big enough issue to detract from a great story. This is the first book I had read that was a first-person account of widowhood from war and also that of the Vietnam experience. It was an excellent blend of the author's personal history (both before and after her husband's death) and the processing of grief which is never truly finished. I found it to be a revelation and would recommend it.

GoodGlory says

****I recieved this book from Goodreads First Reads.****

How do you deal with loss so great that it consumes you? How do you come to terms with the fact that the man you married, loved and adored will never hold you again? How long will it take for your memories of that person to fade, until photographs are the only thing that helps you remember? When dealing with grief, some of us cry, scream, hide ourselves away? In this story of loss and remembrance, the one left behind by the spoils and blood of war, takes all of her husbands letters, photographs and uniforms. Hiding them in casket she buries them away for over four decades. The way she remembered her husband who was killed in Vietnam was tender and passionately. I found myself teary eyed through so many passages of this book. I can't imagine losing someone that I love dearly. To lose them to a war that was not our own, well that would be so much harder to deal with. But this book is a remembrance to David, her husband. I could feel the love she had even now for him, written in her words. I think this books serves as a memorial for him, closure for her. It was powerful, no other words can describe it. I hope writing these words eased some of her pain experienced through the loss of her true love.

Emily says

I admittedly do not know a lot about the Vietnam War, so when the opportunity to read this book written by a widow of a Captain in the U.S. Army who was killed in Vietnam I jumped at the chance. There is something about reading a first person true version of our history that makes any topic infinitely more

interesting.

This is a powerful emotional personal account from Ruth. She shares her background growing up in a peaceful religious family and how she met and fell in love with her beloved husband David Crocker. He grew up in a military family and had a very different upbringing than herself. She shares how she innocent and naive she was in her first months of marriage when the military sent them to Germany. She shares her lack of knowledge about what was going on in Vietnam at the time and so many other tidbits.

The book skips around from different time periods (present day, her childhood, when she met Dave, his time at West Point, their different postings, her time at school, time after Dave etc..). For someone who loves reading about others lives this was a unique peek into her life. She was only 23 when her husband was killed!! He was 25. Both of their lives were just beginning. My heart broke for both of them so much.

This was a very quick read that I would recommend to anyone interested in memoirs, military life for wives during Vietnam or just an interesting life story by a very strong woman.

My only complaint was that some things were repeated a few times when the time period switched back and forth.

Larissa says

Ruth Crocker is a beautiful, lyrical writer who crafts her story very well. Those Who Remain is a beautiful, touching memoir.

Patricia Levack says

Living in a border town I was acquainted with a few Americans that were soldiers during the Vietnam conflict, one who died at a young age because of agent orange. My family has a history of serving in the Canadian military both male and female. That is the reason that I was interested in reading this free Goodreads book. I found it moving because of the normal existance of Ruth's life and how others treated her because she married a soldier, being widowed at such a young age and the decisions she made as a result of the emotional turmoil she found herself. The story takes on a whole new dimension when after many years she connects with Dave's Infantrymen. Very moving. I will not forget the "the small table" "set with a black tablecloth, a single place setting, an overturned wine glass" the "single red rose" or the "slice of lemon". Thank you for sharing.

Terrie says

There were times that I loved the story and shed tears as I read. Having lost a husband, way before his time, I could understand many of the feeling. I would never have buried all that I had of my husband as she did, but we all grieve different. But when she decided to dig them all up and what she found.....that you will have to read to understand.

Story Circle Book Reviews says

Ruth Crocker grew up with her three brothers in a hard-working and somewhat isolated pacifist, anti-war Quaker family in deeply-rooted, historic Old Mystic, CT. She was an innocent child who attended a fundamentalist church in Quakertown with her father, who subscribed to much—but not quite all—of the Quaker teachings. (They did have a television in their home.) Meanwhile, her future husband, an inquisitive child and natural born leader, was growing up in a career Army officer's family with his three siblings, traveling the world, and loving military life. He was becoming a deeply intelligent and energetic man: an avid traveler, hiker, camper, mountain climber, and well-rounded person who was also a kind and generous human being.

When Ruth graduated from high school, her parents encouraged her to pursue her art studies at the nearby community college, so she wouldn't leave home; she acquiesced. She was an eighteen-year-old freshman when she met Dave—in his third year at West Point—on a blind date; it was, ironically, an occasion she'd tried to avoid. Although a seemingly unlikely pair, they soon fell deeply in love: the naïve, pacifist girl and the well-traveled military man. Simultaneously and quietly, as their love story was unfolding, far away in another part of the world, huge numbers of ground troops were beginning to move into Vietnam.

Ruth Whipple and Captain David Rockwell Crocker, Jr. married on June 9, 1966 in Mystic, Connecticut, one day after his graduation from West Point. Their families were delighted and supportive as Ruth became Dave's wife and subsequently traveled with him to his first assignment as an army officer in Wildflecken, Germany. Slowly, sometimes painfully, Ruth learned to navigate the military life, no easy task in a foreign country with a new language. Soon Dave was promoted to First Lieutenant in early 1968 and reassigned to Wurzburg, Germany, a larger post; then in August, 1968, he received orders for Vietnam. Before they returned to the states, Dave took Ruth to the Swiss Alps where he showed her the breathtaking beauty of the land and the Eiger Mountain. His dream, he told her, was to return one day and climb the treacherous north face; but, for now they would do "easy" things. Their rich, treasured time in the Alps passed and soon they flew back home to prepare for Dave's journey to Vietnam.

After serving six months in Vietnam as Company Commander of the 22nd Infantry Regiment, Dave was killed on May 17, 1969 in a violent explosion while inspecting a deserted Viet Cong bunker. His shattered widow at home with her parents was 23 years old. She would reflect a week later that, "During the week that I received his ashes, more than one hundred combat deaths were reported and the drawdown of troops began. One week too late for Dave."

In her profound early grief, Ruth made a decision: she would not bury Dave; rather she would send his body to a crematorium, then take his ashes to the north face of the Eiger Mountain. She would get him far away from "...this country, this war." Then, in his casket, instead of his body, she placed their hundreds of letters, their photographs, and then covered them with her wedding dress and Dave's army uniforms. "I was young, naïve and devastated. That's why I decided to bury all that precious memorabilia... Survival after Dave's death depended on harnessing my imagination and coming up with a way to live with an unsolvable problem; it was a stopgap solution to keep myself alive just for one day, and then the next."

When Dave's sister completed an obligation, the two left for Switzerland. There, during the long drive to Eiger Mountain, the young widow found some relief in the act of driving and reflecting. "In this part of the world I had lived as an adult for the first time and in a marriage, in my own home with a man I loved deeply;

this was the place where I had ultimately grown up in a relationship to which I could never return."

For more than 40 years, Ruth never talked outside her family about her decision to cremate Dave's body and bury, instead, their precious mementoes. "That private act was my initiation into my own private grieving process." Then, in the late 1990s, Ruth experienced changes in her thoughts as she journeyed through the difficult passages of her father, mother, and then brother. She found her "monastic attitude about earlier decisions" shifting as she began seeking to unearth memories of her loved ones. Eventually, 42 years after burying Dave's coffin, she decided to exhume it and retrieve her husband's letters as well as their other treasures.

In this unforgettable book, Ruth Crocker describes an extensive and beautiful exploration of the love of two exceptional people, of sudden widowhood, of military life, of war, and of wisdom gained during her life's journey. Her remarkable memoir simply spills over with uncommon grace and insight.

by Mary Jo Doig
for Story Circle Book Reviews
reviewing books by, for, and about women

Tara says

I received this book as part of a Goodreads First Reads Giveaway. Thank You!!!

This book combines my favorite literary themes: love lost, war, mystery and surprising revelations. Plus, it is based on a true story. The author presents a very engrossing story here and even when I thought she is mad for wanting to exhume her deceased husband's body, I felt so connected to her emotions that her near obsession with finding closure seemed as natural as anything in the midst of her consuming grief. I don't want to give anything away but I would recommend this book. This was an early release and could do with a bit of fine-tooth editing, but the story is compelling enough that I really didn't find it too distracting. Hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Judy says

My husband was in Vietnam same time as her husband. Mine survived only to be taken by agent orange at age 64. I found it hard to relate to her story. First, book is way too long and very repetitive. And she rambles. I was pretty disappointed overall.

Hildegart says

First reads book

I cannot even begin imagining what it must have been like to lose a husband after three years of marriage due to war.

Charlie says

I received this book from Goodreads and the publisher for my review.

The Advanced Reader's Edition book was for me an unusual story.

The author, Ruth W Crocker, kept my interest through out - which is good because this type of story could have lulled me to sleep - IT DIDN'T. Her story becomes so convincing and CLEAR that you feel that you are right there by her side.

Her fierce desire to exhume his coffin after 40 years in the ground (not the body for he was cremated) and to retrieve the personal contents she placed in the empty coffin was an issue that made an emotional personal debate - it's the right thing to do or not?

Her husband, an officer, died in Viet Nam in 1969 after just 3 years of marriage. Now, the author is struggling to find out how and why he died. Her husband had a Heart felt Impact on his fellow soldiers that after Ruth started going to the reunions she began to get a much better feeling of who he was as a soldier.

As the story unfolds and winds down the contents are revealed. No, I'm not going to tell you what she found. But, what I found was her Strength and determination to tie the loose ends together of her short marriage and the people that impacted their lives.

Well done Ruth W. Crocker.
